
Music Education in Germany

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ABSTRAK

Pendidikan Musik di Jerman berdasarkan dua jalur, yaitu jalur formal dalam sekolah umum dan jalur non-formal di sekolah musik semi-swasta atau pembelajaran pribadi. Semua ini menuju ke studi musik di universitas musik dengan beberapa program studi dan spesialisasi tertentu. Dengan demikian pasar musik Jerman dilayani dengan orang ahli dan spesialis sesuai dengan kebutuhan. Ternyata sektor musik pada budaya Jerman masih sangat luas dan aktif sehingga musik merupakan salah satu komoditi sosial yang tertanam penuh dalam masyarakat.

Kata kunci: pendidikan musik, studi musik, universitas musik, budaya Jerman

It may be regarded as quite astonishing that an article on music education in Germany starts with a critical remark, instead of presenting right away a passionate pleading for the benefits of it. Admittedly, and one may read it later in this article, there a lot of positive things. Perhaps there is no other country around the world with such dense and multifold music activities on various levels, except on the Indonesian island of Bali, although the background may be different. Nevertheless, even in Germany we face an increasing amount of obstacles and critical tendencies.

Let us start from the fact that music education in Germany has also gradually become the step child of a so-called modern educational policy. The picture of music education in the class-room as a loose moment of recreation in the densely packed canon of other subjects from sciences until languages is still widely recognized in our present time. Whether this fact is due to a less job-orientated music education at German music universities (Gruhn, W. 1998) or whether it has more to do with the current culturally dominant situation of a "fun and leisure society" (Schulze, G. 1993), is currently an open question. And it also not clear whether the actual economic recession will increase or decrease the necessity of arts.

After all, a basic discussion would be urgently necessary, because an ethic and moral based education (in the widest sense of its meaning)

seems to be of utmost importance in the realm of an abstract and partly alienated media culture. No wonder that the writer Jurek Becker already wrote in 1995 :

To hear pop-music the whole day which is done by a lot of people, or listening to operettas, what one of my neighbours does, can be compared with an intentional blocking of fantasy. But perhaps fantasy is an important pre-requisite, to manage one's own life.

The ongoing output of music then would also include a certain irresponsibility: It is as if the listeners should be "calmed down" like the inhabitants of a closed asylum. It seems that it is supposed to be desirable, to maintain that condition of blocked thinking in an atmosphere of dumbness (...)

Wherever we look around us, it creates the impression that less is understood but more is felt – this is the method of the speechless, in order to meet the threats of so-called everyday life. (...). By that, nothing else is stated except that the gradual disappearance of words from our radio stations is also responsible for right-wing radicalism and the turn towards violence in our society. And it has no balancing function if - from time to time - the moderators tell us that hostility to foreigners is "mega-out". The main problem is less the lack of help for orientation, but much more the fact that the ability becomes stunted that a human being tries on his/her own to find that orientation.

As a matter of fact, a lot of people seem to forget that a thorough music education may

contribute significantly to a „humanistic“ education as a whole, and that music is not only a mere consumer’s product. Furthermore it is still a popular fiction of many people as well to see an artist as a side-product of his/her society, with a certain taste of anarchic bohemianism. Acceptance in society – though a quite questionable one – is only achieved by those “artists” that can present a reasonable materialistic or social success, or better both at the same time. In these cases the socio-cultural appearance seems to be more important than the art product itself.

In other words, also in the Western world and especially in Germany we face a lot of overall problems in our modern society which often seem to be less addressed but apparently need a lot more attention. At least some aspects will be mentioned shortly in the course of the following text.

Some Remarks on the Differences Between Indonesian Music and German/European Music Forms

In order to better understand the situation of music education in Germany and how – in this case - a potential structural transfer to Indonesia may take place, it is compulsory to talk first about some common intercultural misunderstandings. According to my experience there are two main differences between the two music cultures: The first is the oral (Indonesia) respectively the literal (Europe) tradition; and the second aspect is the different origin of the music, seen from a historical and functional point of view. Both differences have nothing at all to do with quality. Let me elaborate shortly on these two issues.

Oral versus Literal

Most music forms from Indonesia are transmitted orally, and there is no notation. That does not necessarily mean that the music is improvised. Balinese gamelan for example is completely fixed but not written down in form of a score. While there is no evidence that oral transmission has any impact on the quality of music, the impact on the respective historical understanding or consciousness is immense. In an oral tradition, change and development in the course of history are almost unknown. Something that was transmitted by the elderly to the young

generation is always supposed to be “exactly the same as it has ever been”. But as a matter of fact, a lot of changes take place as well from generation to generation. But it always happens unconsciously for the respective people (society, ethnic group) who are in charge. No wonder that new compositions that clearly change or only extend traditional rules and systems are believed to destroy the traditional values; and by that they threaten the stability of the respective society in question. Only compositions that are created based on those stable and commonly accepted traditional rules are regarded as: continuing the tradition and stabilizing it at the same time. Furthermore, really new compositions as a reaction on that peculiar Western notion of “contemporariness” – “musik kontemporer” in Indonesia – is generally explained as being not in any connection with the tradition.

The situation and the consciousness is completely opposite in a culture with a literal tradition. A music work that was composed for example in 1750, may still be performed today based on that text/notation from more than 200 years ago. And in comparing the notations over the whole time span from which we have notated music (about 700 – today), it becomes evident that the musical language and grammatics have continuously changed . This creates a notion of tradition as a developmental and always changing process. Consequently, composing in the style of 1750 would be regarded as a huge anachronism; and also consequently, contemporary music is always the spearhead of that ongoing development and nothing separated from it.

Different Musical Levels

Speaking about Indonesian music, one mainly targets towards an incredible amount of local, ethnic-bound music forms with basically two functions, religious and entertaining ones. This may be the case with quite simple music but also with extremely complex works. Only in a few cultural realms like Central Java, Bali and perhaps Sunda, something like a special form of autonomous art music for its own sake exists . And here we also have a famous obstacle in regard to contemporary music that is mostly understood as autonomous art music by the creators. Once again, it seems to be different in Bali, but only there.

In Europe, perhaps especially in Germany, the situation was and still is completely different. Especially in those countries that are supposed to represent the core of "Western music culture", like Germany, France, Italy, Spain and England, there is no real ethnic music tradition. There was perhaps one some centuries ago, but today it has all but vanished (exceptions see below). Commercial "Volksmusik" does not represent any ethnic content, but is only made for business reasons. Even pop-music is not regarded as ethnically bound to something. Pop-music is mainly commercial entertainment without less or only a few geographic specifications. Here, a differentiation in form of social groups may be more effective.

What we call today as the Western music culture has its origin in religious music forms in central Europe, from its beginnings, at least until the 14th century. Then the music world drifted towards the growing courts and their feudal population. Music became the primary leisure tool on a high and sometimes even manieristic level for those nobles and their peculiar life style of leisure, intrigues and splendour. As a peak point one may recall the incredible rich court life of "Louis XIV" in Versailles/Paris in the 17th century. His court became the cradle of orchestra music and the starting point of many new developments in the construction of music instruments. Do not forget that a highly charged Mozart symphony - which today is regarded as a high-class art work - was composed and perceived for mere entertainment reasons at that time. With the growth of a bourgeois society in the early 19th century, the bourgeois took over the feudal art world (mostly as a symbol of "equal" status). At the same time the artist became a completely self-reliant person, only expressing him-/herself. This was the real birth of the notion of an autonomous art work, a notion that is still evident or even more evident today, regardless of its quantitative relevance in the society.

Without understanding these two basic differences, a lot of our German educational system in music would not be comprehensible. It would also be impossible to evaluate what may be transferred and what could not.

The Current Music Life in Germany in General

Based on that background mentioned above, one may assume that the musical life in Germany is mainly happening in limited, elite-like circles. Although this is partly the case in regard to very peculiar musical forms, the overall music life in Germany is of great importance and still plays an integral part of life for most of our population. Currently there is even a national project, called "every child gets a musical instrument". This concept is aimed at grammar schools and even the Kindergarten in order to provide a musical instrument for every child, whether it will continue to learn it later or not. This nationwide project has received high acclaim on the one side. But there was also sharp criticism from a lot of professionals. They argued that the human voice is itself a musical instrument that is owned by everyone. It is by far enough and sufficient to work with, and basic musical skills and representations may be developed through a good musical training since childhood. After all, if a musical instrument is given to every child, it is basically a big economic success for those, who sell those music instruments. As this project has just been started in last autumn, nothing can be said about the current results. For the first years, the project has not yet been installed nationwide, but is tested in form of various pilot projects all over the country. Personally I admit to be rather sceptical as well. On a first sight, the idea seems to be striking, but after more in depth considerations, the danger of misuse seems to be too obvious.

Before we speak about formal music education, let us first have a look on the overall music life in Germany.

It is no exaggeration to state that musical practice and listening to concerts is still regarded as an important quality of life. In spite of popular mass media, encompassing availability on CD, DVD, YouTube etc., appreciating music in a live-concert has never been knocked out and still widely appeals to everyone.

Some research has proven that the younger generation is less interested in classical music concerts, but there are a lot of activities, for example by our professional orchestras. They have

established various programs to go more public in schools and other public institutions. While in America, all orchestras are self-reliant organisations (and by that quite commercially structured), Germany still has 115 so-called "Kulturorchester", partly sponsored by the government. Directly translated "Kulturorchester" means "culture orchestra/s", which unfortunately can be a misleading terminology. That – admittedly not very convenient – term was created to differentiate between those hundreds of music groups that are also called "orchestra" but are in fact a brass-band, a jazz big band, a pop music orchestra or whatever else. "Kulturorchester" - divided in four classes A, B, C and D - are the traditional orchestra type with strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion etc., playing the repertoire from 17th – 21st century. It means that they perform the so-called art music from Johann Sebastian Bach, over Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Robert Schumann, Gustav Mahler, Igor Stravinsky, Karlheinz Stockhausen up to contemporaries like Wolfgang Rihm or even myself, just to name a few European composers. It should be clear that also compositions from foreign composers are performed, as far as they fit stylistically into the repertoire. For example the leading Indonesian contemporary composers for Western instruments Slamet A. Sjukur and Tony Prabowo have already been performed in Europe by those orchestras.

Please note that speaking of some 115 professional orchestras, each orchestra consists of 70 up to 120 continuously engaged musicians with quite a good salary. Although their financial situation is often in question, these orchestras are still sponsored by the national and local governments between 30 – 70%, while the rest has to be gained via entrance fees for the concerts or other sponsors. Fortunately this engagement by the government has never been criticized so far, and even during the current financial crisis, nobody asks for a reduction of those orchestras.

These orchestras play a full concert each month with different programs. Many of them are also connected with theatres and have additionally to support opera productions. Please note that this does not include all the amateur orchestras that cannot be counted here.

Beside these orchestra activities, more than 800 professional chamber music groups are

listed in the classical art music sector, performing all over the country and abroad. And then there are still some hundreds of professional free-lance soloists that cannot be named here. Besides there are numerous amateur ensembles that are not listed anywhere at all. The German composers association currently lists 1400 composers (here also including composers for film music, jazz and pop) in its organisation, but there are still a lot of composers who have not joined the club.

Another musical genre that is quite popular in Germany's professional and amateur sector is the choir. The current number of professional and semi-professional choirs is about 230, while the amount of amateur choirs goes into the thousands.

German radio stations, though not anymore as conducive as they have been 20 years ago, are still broadcasting a lot of art music, in spite of their competition with private stations, favouring pop music. The situation in the TV is similar, but there are special channels like "Arte", "3Sat" and "Phoenix" etc. that are exclusively presenting art productions in their less popular manifestations.

If we have a look to the more popular and amateur sector, the situation becomes even more complex. There are currently more than 18.000 local brass bands in about 11.000 places (towns, villages). They are organised in clubs and at least give their annual concert for their local people. Generally they also play at funerals and other local village events. The second pillar are the thousands of choirs (already mentioned above), all around the country. They are mainly supported by the churches, but there are also special choir clubs, especially for men on a village level. Their function is similar to the brass bands in a local environment.

In these statistics I exclude pop, rock and jazz groups because those change from day to day on an amateur level and would also go into the thousands. Today almost every big high school has activities in this direction.

Taking all these activities into account, it seems obvious that music activities of any kind are an integral part of German cultural life for almost every person from childhood to the seniors. But even if we only look to the professional activities, the question arises, where all these people are performing?

It is obvious that such a vast amount of professionals may only exist if they can continuously present their abilities in public. By that, radio and TV broadcasting play a minor role, but these institutions play a major role in organising big festivals that give professional musicians a lot of chances to perform. They are also active in numerous music competitions, where the world-famous ARD-competition is the annual highlight. Winners of that art music competition - every year there are different instruments and chamber music groups that may compete – can be guaranteed a quite successful start of a professional career as a classical musician. Other festivals are organised by the provinces and local communities. The types and forms are so numerous that they cannot be explained here in detail, but creativity of the organisers is always in demand.

Beside such festivals, every town starting from about 20.000 inhabitants may attempt to have at least one or two regular concert series over the year. In a town like Freiburg or even Lübeck (both about 200.000 inhabitants each) one may choose under 4 – 8 high-class musical events every evening (!), jazz and pop/rock not included. In a bigger town like Hamburg (1, 5 million) concert activities are about 20 – 30 every day.

If we go further into details, let me take my music university as an example: The University of Music in Lübeck, is in fact the biggest concert organiser in the province of Schleswig-Holstein. In a year's period we organise about 400 performances of different character, ranging from our well-known international "Brahms-Festival" in early May, via our participation in the world-famous "Schleswig-Holstein Festival" until the daily concerts of our own students. It is compulsory for a music student to perform at least one time in public every semester, but most students do it up to 4 – 5 times (including chamber music and orchestra activities). Most of our students are also active in external performances all around the country and so do the students of other music universities.

As an overall umbrella, there are many national organisations bringing the individual activities together, and being active lobbyists on a political level. The most famous is the "Deutscher Musikrat" (National Board of Music; in Indonesia something similar is only on a local level like the

"Dewan Kesenian Jakarta-DKJ") with numerous activities, including the annual "Jugend Musiziert" competition on a regional, provincial and finally on a national level. Winners on every level are given many possibilities of visiting special music courses and clinics that take place during the school and semester holidays at various places all over the country. The "Deutscher Musikrat" also supports the "Bundesjazzorchester" (national jazz orchestra) and a lot of other ensembles and festivals. Special support is given to contemporary music. If a professional or semi-professional group plays concerts with contemporary music, and at least 60% of its program is from German composers, the "Deutscher Musikrat" may sponsor that concert up to a certain amount.

While the "Deutscher Musikrat" is focusing on internal music affairs, the "Goethe Institut" opens the door to other cultures and presents the highlights of German music and musicians all over the world. Since recently the Goethe Institute was mainly sponsoring concert tours for classical and contemporary music groups, also including jazz and rock etc. The mere presentation of German art all around the world was the main philosophy for a long time. There was a lesser focus on an intercultural long-term discourse with only a few exceptions (for example especially in Indonesia during the 1990s in Jakarta and Bandung), but a priority on pure concert presentations of Western art forms.

As a matter of fact, that policy has changed significantly, due to the new general secretary Dr. Hans-Georg Knopp, who in the 1980s also had worked at the Goethe Institute in Jakarta. This amazing shift in policy can only be welcomed warmly because today, intercultural discourses, collaborations etc. are compulsory in cultural exchange programs and activities.

The third institution so-to-speak between the "Deutscher Musikrat" and the Goethe Institute is the DAAD, the German Academic Exchange Service. While many people believe that the DAAD only gives scholarships for post-graduate academic studies in sciences, languages, technology and economics, art plays a quite important role in DAAD's policies. As the head of the music exchange program, I can only recommend to Indonesian musicians to be more active in looking for scholarships, especially

after the DAAD finally dropped its deadlines in age for applications. The DAAD, who is financed by all German universities and the foreign department, provides mainly scholarships for foreigners who want to come to Germany in order to enter post-graduate and doctoral study programs. But it offers also scholarships for German students for advanced studies abroad. Last not least, the DAAD provides temporary help on an academic level in form of short- or long-time lectureships by German guest professors in other countries. And with that, we have approached the broad field of music education.

Music Education in Germany

Although artists and teachers are continuously complaining about the decrease of music education, Germany still has a reasonable educational system for music. If not, how would all those activities, mentioned above, be possible? But as a matter of fact, there are some obstacles in our system as well. Currently they are sharply addressed by lobbyists and other people, who are interested in culture and arts (see also the introduction of this article).

We may start at the lowest level, which is the average family in Germany with one or two children. Most parents (who are financially able to) find it convenient if their child or their children play a music instrument. While the real reasons might be multifold, at least there is a certain social pressure to do so. Unfortunately a lot of even talented young students come into contact with laymen or badly educated music teachers. Here we all must be more alert to detect misuse. We should even try to achieve more control via music education in formal schools, in order to avoid negative results.

Most children may come into contact with music already during their time in the "Kindergarten". Singing adequate children's songs and in many cases playful activities with different sound sources provide first musical contacts and mental representations. One may not underestimate the importance of musical contacts in this early stage and even before. Most neuronal "installations" will be fixed during this phase. It has already been proven that children who perceive a bigger variety of music, actively or passively will accept different musical expression better in their later life.

During grammar school (4 years in Germany), music and fine arts play a certain, though not too important role in our educational system. Except some special private schools (the so-called Waldorf Schools for example), music education at this level should be further intensified on a broader spectrum. During the following school years (middle school, high school) music is presented quite differently. Some schools have it compulsory until the end of the school period. Others offer an intensified period during class 9 – 11, while for the last two years, it is free choice; and the third way is to have it the other way around in exchange with fine arts. And then there are some special schools with a major in music (similar to the SMKI in Indonesia). Although the situation is quite stable compared with other countries, German musicians and cultural and educational politicians are not satisfied with the tendency of decrease in music education in favour of sciences and languages, although it has been proven that music education contributes significantly to a balanced and creative human behaviour.

The content of music education in public schools may differ as well from province to province or even from school to school, although there are curricular guidelines. Most of German music teachers do not believe in a curriculum because it is limiting the creative activities and the basic concept called "learning by doing". The VDS, the national organisation of school teachers continuously criticises provincial government policies and encourages its members to go beyond the limiting guidelines. At the same time the VDS does a lot for its members with educational programs, teaching materials and congresses all over the country.

Parallel to music education in public schools there is the public music school system. Public music schools are partly sponsored by the local government. The target of these music schools is multi-fold from elementary stages up to programs for the elderly. Currently there are 924 public music schools in 3000 places providing music education for some million people. Only in a few cases students from public music schools are able to pass an entry exam of the music universities, as mass education is more prominent. A few music schools have started to develop cooperation programs with a music university near by. The idea is to prepare their students on a higher level. German music

universities appreciate such activities very much, because it is almost the only way to increase the amount of potential professional music candidates.

The final step of music education is the music university. Currently Germany has 24 music universities. Beside these institutions there are still other music departments integrated in pedagogic faculties, but they are exclusively for music education in grammar and middle schools only. Then there are still some institutions especially focussing on church music. They have no academic status but sometimes provide a highly artistic level, similar to that of a music university. Furthermore there are a few conservatories (formally between the music schools and the music universities) with various levels of quality. Yet the 24 music universities are the core of academic music education, including also jazz and popular music programs nowadays.

Academic Music Education

The 24 music universities are quite independent institutions, ranging from 300 (Trossingen) up to 1700 (Berlin) music students. The average amount of students is about 500. Let us take my own university in Lübeck as an example. Currently we have 480 students in various study programs (see below). These students are educated by currently 40 professors and 120 lecturers. This is a relation which we are not happy about, because lecturers can hardly be integrated into the self-organisation of the university. The music university in Freiburg for example with only slightly more students (520) can rely on 72 professors and only 70 lecturers. The reason for such differences has to do with long-term policies of the provincial governments. The average amount of teaching obligation is 18 hours for a professor in music practice and 8 – 12 hours for a professor in music science (musicology, music paedagogy). Nevertheless almost no teacher takes care about this and teaches as much as he/she likes.

People often wonder why such small departments – the law faculty only of a normal university in Hamburg may have 8000 students and 10 professors! – need such an amount of high level teachers. This is due to the fact that most classes in music are individual classes. Only lectures in musicology, analysis and music paedagogy are in

bigger groups, while music theory and ear training is practised in smaller groups of 4 – 6 people.

As a matter of fact, many people want to study music because it is still seen as something, from which one can make a decent living from, at least in Germany. But also from abroad there is a real interest in studying in Germany. The music university in Lübeck has currently a percentage of 52% of foreign students (!) with the majority from Korea, Japan, China, Russia and Poland. As studying in Lübeck is still free of charge, one may assume that this might be a reason for an application in Lübeck. But it is the same case at all the other music universities in Germany. And it is a common experience that temporary visitors/tourists of our historical building in Lübeck feel that they have entered a foreign country when they see lots of Asian faces in the lobby.

How do we handle such a national and international interest in studying music? Everything starts with a hard entry exam. Our basic philosophy is only to accept students where we have a strong conviction that the person in question will later be able to make decent living in music. This asks for quite high and “unsocial” standards.

Entry exams are for every semester and the average amount of applicants is between 600 and 1200. Seen from the fact that we have only 480 regular students, one can imagine how strong the selection process will be. Normally we may only accept between 40 – 50 students every semester (less than 10% !) due to the amount making their exams. We cannot accept more to due the fact that most classes are individual classes (see above).

Studying at a music university does not mean studying music as a whole. Our new Bachelor programs (4 years) are divided in the following sub-programs:

- a) instrumental artistic studies (almost all Western instruments);
- b) Vocals (Lied and opera)
- c) Church Music
- d) Music theory/Ear training
- e) Composition
- f) Music Education (for school teacher)

Each sub program has its own design. Only during the first two years there are some similarities. From the third year on, further specialisations may be chosen, including instrumental paedagogics, musicology, chamber music, popular music/jazz etc.

Then the Master programs follow. Here we have almost the same sub-divisions, but popular music and jazz excluded. After that there is currently the "Soloist Class" for highly gifted instrumentalists and composers and a new PhD program only in musicology/Musictheory/Music paedagogics.

This is basically the structure of a music university which in its basic form is quite similar for all 24 music universities.

Summary

Once again, it is obvious that music appreciation, music practice and music education play a significant role in German society. This is accepted by the whole society whether one likes music or not. Music is seen as an important part of one's own culture and also an important tool for a humanistic development, based on creativity and communication. Indonesian people may ask where is dance education, recalling that music and dance are in a mutual relationship in Indonesia? Here is a distinct German deficit, which has to do with our history and cannot be further elaborated in this context. Nevertheless, some universities as the Folkwang Music University in Essen have also a dance department.

How far the German system may provide model-like elements for the Indonesian society, must better be decided by the Indonesian side.

One thing is clear: it is not only the good intention by the government that may improve the situation in arts. If the whole society does not take part in such a process, political decisions are useless. In other words, a more significant role of music as an art form (and not only for mere entertainment reasons) must come from the bottom of the society. And this at least asks for a better music education in public schools, starting exclusively with Indonesian art forms and NOT with foreign ones. Only being deeply rooted in one's own musical realm enables a person to appreciate something from outside its own cultural environment. Western music as a whole still is a foreign and alien medium of art for Indonesians at a first sight. Please note that what is supposed to represent Western music in the media (or in old school text books) is mostly a mere side product in the West itself. But it is important to be in contact with each other to exchange mutual experiences. We should continuously try to learn and then to understand and appreciate "the other", whatever it is. Then the richness of experience may be overwhelming for us all. But it is only possible with strong roots in one's own culture.

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